

Community resources

[Follow us on Twitter](#) [Check our Reddit](#) [Twitter this](#) [Digg this page](#) [Contact us on IRC](#)

courage is contagious

Viewing cable 06GENEVA2654, LITTLE PROGRESS AND MUCH CONFUSION AND FRUSTRATION \

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#06GENEVA2654**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
06GENEVA2654	2006-10-19 13:15	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	US Mission Geneva

Appears in these articles:

http://www.letemps.ch/swiss_papers

```
VZCZCXRO4453
PP RUEHBC RUEHDBU RUEHDE RUEHKUK RUEHLH RUEHPW RUEHROV
DE RUEHGV #2654/01 2921315
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 191315Z OCT 06
FM USMISSION GENEVA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1433
INFO RUEHZJ/HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNISL/ISLAMIC COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 0840
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 0462
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 3846
RUEHJB/AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA 0494
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 1548
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 5885
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 0482
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 0525
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS 0484
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 0394
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM 5267
RUEHKI/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA 0619
RUEHLS/AMEMBASSY LUSAKA 0304
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 0290
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 1734
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 1950
RUEHSN/AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR 0280
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 0583
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 4138
RUEHROV/AMEMBASSY VATICAN
RUEHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA 2695
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2368
```

```
2006-10-19 13:15:00 06GENEVA2654 US Mission Geneva CONFIDENTIAL 06USMISSIONGENEVA2654 VZCZCXRO4453\
PP RUEHBC RUEHDBU RUEHDE RUEHKUK RUEHLH RUEHPW RUEHROV\
DE RUEHGV #2654/01 2921315\
ZNY CCCCC ZZH\
P 191315Z OCT 06\
FM USMISSION GENEVA\
```

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1433\
INFO RUEHZJ/HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY\
RUCNISL/ISLAMIC COLLECTIVE PRIORITY\
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 0840\
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 0462\
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 3846\
RUEHJB/AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA 0494\
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 1548\
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 5885\
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 0482\
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 0525\
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS 0484\
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 0394\
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM 5267\
RUEHKI/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA 0619\
RUEHLS/AMEMBASSY LUSAKA 0304\
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 0290\
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 1734\
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 1950\
RUEHSN/AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR 0280\
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 0583\
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 4138\
RUEHROV/AMEMBASSY VATICAN\
RUEHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA 2695\
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2368 C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 GENEVA 002654 \

SIPDIS \

SIPDIS \

IO FOR DAS M. LAGON, DRL FOR DAS E. BARKS-RUGGLES \

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/16/2016 \

TAGS: PHUM UNHRC

SUBJECT: LITTLE PROGRESS AND MUCH CONFUSION AND FRUSTRATION \
LEAD TO ADJOURNMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL'S SECOND SESSION \

GENEVA 00002654 001.2 OF 004 \

Classified By: PolCouns Velia M. De Pirro for reasons 12958: 1.4 (b)(d) \

Summary \

1. (C) The Human Rights Council's second session was \
adjourned without achieving much after three weeks. It is to \
resume November 27-28, when it will deal with 44 resolutions \
tabled by members when it became apparent that little of \
substance would be achieved. The Council's failure was due \
in part to growing pains of a new body, but most of the blame \
was laid by members on unpredictable, often obscure, and \
confusing management by HRC President Luis Alfonso de Alba. \
His preference for small group meetings and closed sessions \
of the Council, from which observer States and NGOs were \
excluded, drew criticism from non-members and regional \
groups. De Alba's penchant for setting aside modalities and \
rules without explanation resulted in confusion and \
frustration among delegations. The level of discontent was \
clearly evident on the last day of the session when four \
GRULAC delegations delivered statements condemning the HRC's \
failure to deal with serious situations and criticizing the \
lack of predictability and transparency in the Council. The \
only success was the increased participation by NGOs in the \
inter-active dialogue with Special Procedures despite efforts \
by Cuba, China and Russia to block their involvement. U.S. \
engagement was welcomed by most delegations seeking to build \
a Council better able to address serious situations. \
Planning for the third session is underway among Geneva \
delegations. Success in addressing issues of concern to the \
United States and its partners will depend on early and \
concerted action in capitals. End Summary. \

Little Progress \

2. (SBU) Expectations for the second regular session of the \
Human Rights Council were mixed and not particularly high. \
The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) expected to \
continue its anti-Israel focus and attention on the issue of \
religious intolerance. The Western (WHRG) and the Latin \
American (GRULAC) groups hoped to address at least one urgent \
situation -- Sudan/Darfur. The bulk of the session was to be \
devoted to the reports of the Special Procedures mandate \
holders. This segment was seen by many delegations, \
especially Norway, India, Canada and the Latin American \

members, as successful. This was in large part because NGOs, \ supported by the WHRG and GRULAC, gained ground in being \ allowed to participate in the inter-active dialogue with the \ Special Procedures despite repeated efforts by Cuba, China, \ Russia and Belarus to disallow any participation by civil \ society. The rapporteurs' reports held few surprises since \ their written reports had been publicly available for many \ months. In addition, the rapporteurs, their working methods, \ and biases were well known to States. Consequently, \ interventions by the concerned States were predictable, \ focused on the shortcomings of the reports or the working \ methods of the rapporteurs. The only exceptions were \ virulent personal attacks by the Cuban and Belarussian \ delegations on the rapporteurs dealing with their countries, \ and the report on the Israel-Lebanon war which drew fire from \ all sides. \

GENEVA 00002654 002.2 OF 004 \

Much Frustration with the President and the Process \

13. (SBU) While the inter-active dialogue was seen as \ generally successful, HRC President Luis Alfonso de Alba's \ management of the Council drew criticism. His unpredictable \ wavering between strictly applying or completely setting \ aside agreed modalities for the meeting caused confusion and \ grumbling from delegations. Discussions with the Council \ Secretariat revealed equal uncertainty among staff charged \

SIPDIS \ with supporting the Council. Dissatisfaction with de Alba \ increased over the course of the session as he insisted on a \ "substantive" consensus omnibus resolution on the reports and \ recommendations of the Special Procedures, but failed to \ provide adequate guidance or information on how he planned to \ arrive at a text. Most delegations tried to work with de \ Alba to avoid the Commission's practice of over 100 \ individual resolutions on the reports. It was, however, \ apparent from the start that consensus on the recommendations \ was impossible given States' objections to those that applied \ to them. Nonetheless, De Alba insisted on an omnibus \ resolution and even broadened it to include new initiatives. \ In pursuit of agreement to his plan, de Alba held small group \ meetings and closed sessions of the Council, excluding \ observer States and NGOs. His preference for working behind \ closed doors and the resulting lack of transparency quickly \ drew the ire of delegations, including the United States. In \ meetings with Ambassador Tichenor, De Alba rationalized his \ actions by saying that he needed flexibility to operate. \ Distrust increased, however, as regional groups felt excluded \ from the process and de Alba began to consult with the EU \ presidency, the NAM (presently chaired by Cuba) and the OIC. \ Unhappiness with the HRC President and growing doubt that the \ Council would yield concrete results, led delegations to \ table 44 resolutions by the last week of the Council. A \ U.S.-led draft resolution on democracy was ruled to be too \ late to be accepted in the unpredictable swings of de Alba's \ gavel. \

Consensus or Nothing \

14. (SBU) De Alba called for a consensus resolution covering \ new initiatives, but excluding those that in his view were \ covered by an almost agreed "generic" text on the Special \ Procedures reports. Poorly managed negotiations, lack of \ transparency and general confusion on how de Alba would deal \ with 44 resolutions basically led to an impasse. In an \ apparent effort to have something concrete to point to, de \ Alba proposed a consensus presidential statement on 4-5 of \ the key issues and transferal of other resolutions to the \ November session of the Council. The first draft circulated \ by de Alba was not so much a consensus text as a compilation \ of issues of interest to certain delegations or groups. \ Three items drew on OIC language dealing with religious \ intolerance (without mention of religious freedom), Israeli \ settlements and construction of the wall, and the situation \ in Lebanon. The Sudan/Darfur language was drawn from the EU \ resolution, and the paragraph on right to development was \ taken from Cuba's resolution on behalf of the NAM. Aware \ that the text would not gain consensus, de Alba chaired an \ abbreviated morning session during which a generic text on \ the inter-active dialogue was adopted. He also announced that \ follow up to previous Council resolutions would be part of \

the agenda of the third session. Comment: The latter was a sop to the OIC, which had threatened to call a vote against transferring the tabled resolutions to the November session unless its resolutions focused on Israel were addressed. End comment. In a meeting with de Alba, Ambassador Tichenor and IO DAS Mark Lagon raised U.S. opposition to the lack of balance in the statement's treatment of Middle East issues and religious intolerance. They also called on de Alba to exercise greater transparency and predictability in his consultations and management of the Council.

15. (SBU) The second draft included only changes requested by the OIC to toughen sections of concern to its members. It also included a new item on humanitarian law at the request of the Swiss delegation, which had already indicated its intention to support the text. Reaction in the Western Group to both texts was mixed and showed once again the group's inability to act in concert. Non-members United States, Australia, Canada, Norway and New Zealand opposed the texts and warned against making consensus the goal of the Council rather than protecting and promoting human rights. Canada, a member of the Council, also made clear its opposition to the text. The Canadian delegation, obviously uncomfortable, was under instructions from Ottawa to break consensus on its own if necessary. The EU was engaged in an internal struggle between opposition to the text and fearing censure if it or the Western Group were blamed for the Council's failure. In the end, "nothing is better than a bad text" became the motto for all groups. In the closing session the President announced that consensus had failed and that all tabled resolutions would be taken up at the resumption of the second session of the Council November 27-28, and that the third session would begin two days late on November 29.

GRULAC Challenges President \

16. (SBU) In a surprising move that drew comment from all delegations, at the conclusion of the session the delegations of Peru, Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina made statements condemning the Council's failure to address the crisis situation in Sudan/Darfur and criticizing the lack of transparency and predictability in the Council's operations -- a direct hit at de Alba's management of the Council. While Peru's statement could reflect the Peruvian PermRep Manuel Rodriguez Cuadros' resentment at having had to step aside in June so de Alba could take the presidency, interventions by usually more reserved GRULAC members highlighted the level of discontent in the Council with de Alba's presidency. Similar statements noting the Council's failure to deal with serious human rights situations were made by Ambassador Tichenor and India. The Finnish Presidency had a statement and was on the list of speakers, but opted not to deliver a statement. A Finnish delegate claimed that they changed their minds not to encourage the OIC to speak. Since no one from the OIC was on the speakers' list and the session was drawing to a close, the Finnish excuse rings hollow.

Comment: U.S. Role \

17. (C) The United States delegation, headed by Ambassador Tichenor and supported by Washington-based staff, including \

IO DAS Mark Lagon, actively engaged during the three-week session. In an effort to demonstrate U.S. support for country-specific mandates as well as the thematic mandates focused on civil and political rights, USdel delivered statements and participated in the interactive dialogue with rapporteurs. (Statements are accessible on Mission Geneva's website.) The United States' engagement in the session was welcomed by most delegations as a sign that the USG was serious in trying to help shape the Council into a more effective body than the Commission. U.S. leadership in the Western Group was particularly welcomed by non-EU partners frustrated by the EU's inability to arrive a strong unified positions and its penchant for delivering often weak general statements. Media interest was tamer during this session in part because this session did not produce much in the way of \

drama or reportable news, but also because reporters and \
their editors are starting to see the Council as little \
better than the Commission. As the AP bureau chief put it, \
"The Council is making itself marginal." That being said, \
U.S. statements received good coverage in the wires. USG \
views were thereby well-disseminated. \

18. (C) Planning for the third session of the Council is \
underway within regional and other groups. Ambassador \
Tichenor hosted Community of Democracy Convening Group \
ambassadors October 13 (septel) and hosted select African \
Group ambassadors October 17. JUSCANZ has commenced a series \
of weekly meetings to assure that it is not hampered in \
achieving shared goals by the EU's cumbersome coordination \
process. These preparations only address, however, issues \
from the perspective of Geneva-based delegations -- 44 \
pending resolutions, the need for more predictable and \
transparent working methods for the Council, and the \
importance of reaching across regional lines to assure that \
the Council can respond to concerns beyond those of the OIC. \
Progress on the Council's foundations and working methods as \
well as concrete actions that address emerging or serious \
human rights situations will require action in capitals \
either separately or jointly with like-minded partners. \
While this message has focused on the difficulties resulting \
from HRC President de Alba's imprecise and often ambiguous \
management of the Council, it is important to keep in mind \
that determined and coordinated action by the United States \
and its partners can positively influence the work of the \
Council. It requires, however, early planning on focused \
objectives. \

TICHENOR \